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ABSTRACT

This paper provides background information from the professional literature related to teacher mentoring programs. It is organized into four sections. The first section, "Mentoring Rationale" discusses the need for new teacher support, the success of mentoring as a useful induction strategy, and benefits to participants. Section two, "The Knowledge Base--Using Information on Mentoring" describes the concept of mentoring, the findings from research in adult development, business, and education, and the unique quality of mentoring in schools. The third section "The Critical Factors--Conditions Fostering Program Success" deals with the selection of mentors, matching mentor-new teacher pairs, roles for mentors, training for mentors, a supportive environment, and realistic program expectations. Section four, "The Mentoring Program--Determining Roles and Activities" focuses on mentoring in practice, shared roles and responsibilities, and program development. Among the recommendations are that educators consider the implications of the literature in planning statewide mentoring programs and that school districts initiate a pilot mentoring program before adopting one districtwide. (Contains 50 references.) (LL)

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Mentoring Programs for New Teachers

by Ellen Newcombe

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Introduction

More and more school districts across the country are starting mentoring programs for new teachers. These districts recognize that new teachers need emotional and pedagogical support and that mentoring can effectively meet these needs. In using mentors, school districts are providing an important incentive that increases job satisfaction and helps to attract and retain competent professionals. Mentoring programs give teachers the support they need early in their careers and reward mentors for sharing their experiences and expertise with their colleagues.

Currently, many school districts are exploring the use of mentoring as part of a teacher incentive system. This paper is written to provide background information from the professional literature related to teacher mentoring programs. It describes the rationale for mentoring, reviews information about mentoring in education and other professions, discusses the conditions necessary for success, and presents some program development considerations. It concludes with recommendations for establishing a mentoring program.

Mentoring Rationale

Three key propositions provide the rationale for mentoring relationships for new teachers:

- New teachers need support and continuing staff development to succeed.
- Mentoring is a successful induction strategy.
- Mentoring benefits all participants, namely new teachers, mentors, and schools.

Each proposition is discussed below.

New Teachers Need Support

A compelling reason for implementing a mentoring program is that new teachers need the support mentoring can provide. Even the best preservice programs do not fully prepare teachers for the reality of the classroom. Most teachers begin teaching with idealism, subject matter information, and untested theoretical knowledge about teaching. Their practical experience gained in student teaching, while valuable, does not fully prepare them for the minute-by-minute decisions they must make in their own classrooms. New teachers' confidence may erode as they find that they are expected (by both themselves and others) to perform as veterans, but they cannot possibly do so because much of good teaching must be developed over time from actual experience.

As new teachers are confronted by the expectations and demands of the school context, by the teaching decisions which must be made, and by the problems that arise, they may falter. Left to their own resources, many new teachers find their early experience troubling or traumatic. Some may eventually master these early difficulties, but others "give up" and adopt unproductive teaching behaviors. When such teachers stay in the profession, they do not readily discover the teaching strategies that can increase their instructional competence. Far too great a number become discouraged and leave the profession. Without early assistance, the potential of many new teachers is lost (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985a; Gray & Gray, 1985; Lortie, 1975; Loucks-Horsley, Harding, Arbuckle, Murray, Dubea and Williams, 1987; Krupp, 1987; McDonald, 1980).

Mentoring Is Successful

There is ample evidence from both research and practice that mentoring is a useful induction strategy. The literature on teacher induction identifies a variety of new teacher needs and a range of purposes which induction programs seek to fulfill. For example, an induction program might help teachers resolve immediate problems or answer questions about what to do in the classroom, improve teaching skills, provide emotional support, or socialize teachers into the school. The literature shows that mentoring is a strategy often selected to help achieve the varied purposes of induction programs. In a review of promising induction practices, most were found to have mentoring activities (Newcombe, 1987), and in a national survey identifying 112 local induction programs, 58 percent had mentoring relationships (Kester & Marockie, 1987). Mentoring is a central feature in several statewide programs (e.g., California, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Washington) and a key element in many district programs (e.g., Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Toledo).

Mentoring Benefits Participants

Numerous benefits can be expected from successful mentoring programs. New teachers receive the support they need to become competent professionals. Professional growth is stimulated in mentors as they reexamine their own teaching beliefs and practices and as they develop the competencies necessary to share their expertise. The opportunity for mentors to pass along the knowledge and skills they have gained through experience serves as a powerful professional incentive for mature teachers. The leadership opportunities, training, and compensation available to mentors

contribute to greater job satisfaction. School districts benefit from the increased competence and satisfaction of new teachers and mentors, and are better able to attract and retain good teachers. Also, the development of collegial relationships between new teachers and mentors can be used to further additional school improvement goals. In summary, while mentoring programs are often created primarily to benefit new teachers, they should be viewed as interactive systems which benefit all participants (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1987).

The Knowledge Base -- Using Information on Mentoring

Educators who are designing or implementing mentoring programs can tap a large knowledge base on mentoring relationships and programs which has been discussed and summarized elsewhere (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985a; Gray & Gray, 1985; Merriam, 1983). Instead of reviewing the literature again, this section of the paper offers three generalizations about the professional literature for the purpose of guiding educators as they begin to use the information about mentoring. These statements, which are discussed below, deal with the concept of mentoring, the sources of information about mentoring, and the differences in mentoring between education and other professions.

Understanding the Concept of Mentoring

The first generalization is that the concept of mentoring, as used in the literature, is a complex one which varies greatly from study-to-study and from program-to-program. Educators should realize that mentoring means

many things to different people. A precise definition of mentoring or an exact description of the roles and activities of mentors does not really exist; this is especially true of the mentoring practiced in schools. The multiple uses of the term "mentoring" can lead to confusion, especially when comparisons are made between mentoring relationships in schools and those found in other fields such as business.

The term mentor was originally derived from Homer's Odyssey, where the mentor was a trusted guide and counselor, and the mentor-protege relationship a deep and meaningful association. Currently, mentoring in schools is used in an unrestricted way to mean the establishment of an ongoing relationship between an experienced educator (usually a teacher) and a less experienced teacher (often a new teacher*) for the purpose of professional guidance. All kinds of helping relationships between the two groups are termed "mentoring." Other labels which also are used to describe such relationships include cooperating, advising, supporting, master, buddy, or consulting teacher or coach (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985b; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986).

Because many current mentoring programs lack a strong conceptual foundation, the recent literature proposes a more careful examination and structuring of the mentoring role. Gehrke (1988) suggests that the love relationship (I-Thou) described by the social philosopher Martin Buber should form the basis for mentoring relationship. Anderson and Shannon

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*The term new teacher used in this paper includes both beginning teachers and experienced teachers who are new to a school district. While mentoring programs are most frequently offered to beginning teachers, they also can benefit teachers new to a district.

(1988) argue that effective mentoring should be defined by the following attributes: the process of nurturing, the act of serving as a role model, five mentoring functions (i.e., teaching, sponsoring, encouraging, counseling, and befriending), a focus on professional and/or personal development, and an ongoing caring relationship. Both articles underline the need for conceptual clarity in designing mentoring programs.

The ways in which the mentor relationship is structured in practice vary. Most often a single mentor is paired with a single new teacher. However, one mentor may assist several new teachers, or a team of experienced educators may support an individual teacher. In some induction programs mentoring is the basic strategy for helping new teachers, and in others mentoring is one of several activities used. By understanding the many ways in which mentoring has been defined and described, educators can explore different options for structuring such relationships (Gray & Gray, 1985). This information can help them design mentoring activities which best match local needs and conditions.

Findings from Research in Adult Development, Business, and Education

The second generalization about the mentoring literature is that research findings about mentoring comes from many fields including adult development, business, and education. Familiarity with this information can assist educators in designing and implementing mentoring programs in schools. Figure 1 highlights some key understandings about mentoring from studies in the fields of adult development and business.

While there are significantly fewer studies about mentoring in schools, there are important findings on the existence and value of both naturally

Figure 1

Key Understandings about Mentoring from Adult Development and Business

The Developmental Process

- The mentor relationship is one of the most developmentally important relationships a person can have in early adulthood (Levinson, 1978).
- A young person's entry into the adult world may be hindered by the absence of a positive mentoring relationship (Levinson, 1978).
- Persons most often become proteges at an early adult or mid-career transition phase (Bova & Phillips, 1984).
- Becoming a mentor can provide mature adults with meaning and satisfaction (Kram, 1983; Schmidt & Wolfe, 1980).

The Outcomes of Mentoring

- Proteges learn from mentors risk-taking behaviors, communication skills, political skills, and skills related to their professions (Bova & Phillips, 1984).

The Mentoring Relationship

- The mentoring relationship passes through a series of phases: initiation, cultivation, and separation (Kram, 1983).
- Characteristics affecting the mentoring relationship include mentor's age, gender, organization position, power, and self-confidence (Hunt & Michael, 1983).
- The crucial component of a mentoring relationship is ability to work together, not necessarily social background or common outside interest (Zey, 1984).

Designing Mentoring Programs

- Top management must support and publicize the program (Phillips-Jones, 1983).
- Training sessions for mentors need to be conducted on topics such as the benefits of the mentor relationship, ways to increase the protege's self-esteem, or adaptations of mentoring to particular settings (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike & Newman, 1984).

occurring mentoring relationships and formally organized programs in schools, and on the roles played and activities performed in schools (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; Fagan & Walter, 1982; Gehrke & Kay, 1984; Huffman & Leak, 1986; Odell, 1986; Odell, Loughlin & Ferraro, in press). One might conclude from the studies, as well as from the more general reports describing mentoring in schools, that there are many kinds of mentoring relationships in schools that benefit participants (Bird, 1986; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985b; Gray & Gray, 1985; Hanes & Mitchell, 1985; Huling-Austin, Putman & Galvez-Hjornevik, n.d.; Kent, 1985; Newcombe, 1987; Odell, 1986; Varah, Theune & Parker, 1985; Waters & Wyatt, 1985). Below are listed some findings from studies about mentoring in schools.

- One hundred and eleven of 188 teachers in a study had a person who "helped, guided or sponsored them." The mentors were college professors/supervisors, school principals, and former teachers, but not co-workers (Gerhke & Kay, 1984).
- Ninety-six percent of participating beginning teachers said the mentoring role was important to the induction process and 67 percent felt the mentoring function most valuable to them was informal conversation (Huffman & Leak, 1986).
- In a survey of 93 beginning teachers, the service/function of mentors that was rated as most important was that which focused on classroom practice, e.g., observation/feedback, solving problems, self-evaluation (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985).

Mentoring in Schools Is Unique

The third judgment about the literature is that mentoring in schools differs significantly from mentoring in other occupations. Educators should carefully consider the needs of new teachers and the realities of the educational context in designing mentoring programs. Information from other

fields can guide their decisions, but may have to be adapted to fit educational situations.

Some of the ways in which school mentoring relationships differ from those in business or other professions are discussed below (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Weber, 1987).

- Mentoring relationships in schools are most likely to be purposefully created, rather than naturally occurring. Since successful relationships are dependent on the compatibility of participants, the assignment of a mentor to a new teacher may adversely affect outcomes if not carefully done.

- The ability of mentors and proteges to influence each other's working relationships is significantly less in schools than in business. Mentors cannot directly affect work assignments for new teachers, and new teachers do not increase their mentors' scope of power by moving into higher positions, as can happen in business. The inability to directly benefit each other's careers eliminates an important incentive for the relationship.

- In education, mentors and new teachers work together for relatively short periods of time--often one year or less. This is a substantially shorter period time than in business where such partnerships may last several years. It is important for educators to develop induction program goals that fit the assigned time period.

The Critical Factors -- Conditions Fostering Program Success

Despite wide acceptance of the value of mentoring as an induction tool, it has not been extensively analyzed or studied. There are few evaluations of mentoring programs (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986); however, reports of successful practice do appear in the literature and the recommendations made can be considered in program design. The conditions indicated as desirable for effective mentoring are discussed under the following topics:

- selection of mentors
- matching mentor-new teacher pairs
- roles for mentors

- training for mentors
- a supportive environment
- realistic program expectations.

Selection of Mentors

Critical to program success is the selection of mentor candidates who are competent professionals and are willing and able to help others gain similar knowledge and skills. Generally, mentors are required to have three to five years of successful teaching experience. According to the mentoring literature, good mentors have identifiable characteristics. For example, Gray & Gray (1985) report successful mentors are people-oriented and secure, and like and trust their proteges; and Galvez-Hjornevik & Smith (1985) have composed a list of eleven recommended characteristics. Although lists from various sources differ in how specific characteristics are described, all emphasize exemplary teaching and facility in working with adults (Lambert & Lambert, 1985). Districts often have statements or lists of the characteristics they are seeking in mentors. However, there is little guidance in the literature as to how to actually identify such characteristics in mentor candidates (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985).

Matching Mentor-New Teacher Pairs

The matching of mentor-new teacher pairs appears critical to the success of the program. This matching is frequently carried out by the teachers' principal. The following recommendations are found in the literature related to this process (Galvez-Hjornevik & Smith, 1985; Gray & Gray, 1985; Huling-Austin, Barnes & Smith, 1985):

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- The mentor should have an assignment that is closely related to that of the new teacher (subject matter and grade level).
- The mentor and new teacher should be located near each other.
- The mentor and new teacher should have compatible ideologies about teaching and classroom management.
- Gender and age should be considered in matching mentors and beginning teachers. Same-sex pairing is preferred and age differences of eight to ten years seem optimal.
- Pairing should be made for a specific limited time period and then be reassessed.

Although there is no guarantee that these suggestions will ensure the success of the mentoring relationship, the literature shows that failure to heed them can lead to problems.

Roles for Mentors

The literature indicates that the roles for mentors are well-defined in successful programs (Galvez-Hjornevik & Smith, 1985; Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; Kent, 1985). Information is available on what mentors actually do (Odell, 1987) and on what mentoring assistance is considered most valuable by new teachers (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985). In both cases, assistance which focuses on classroom activities and performance is rated highly. The roles for mentors are described both in terms of general functions, e.g., resource linker, facilitator, trainer, colleague/coach, and supervisor (Kent, 1985) and specific activities, e.g., assists with long-term goals, objectives, and lesson plans (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985a).

In a study of the Teacher Advisor Project, Little (1985) reported on the mentoring role of the advisors and also analyzed the interactions between advisors and teachers. She documented the specific ways in which the two groups looked at teaching together and established that advisors

rarely gave direct advice to teachers. Generally, the literature recommends that mentors be in a supportive rather than an evaluative role (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986).

Failure to specify roles for mentors can negatively influence the success of the program (Huling-Austin, Putman & Galvez-Hjornevik, n.d.). It is recommended that mentors not be expected to satisfy every need of the new teachers. For example, orientation to district goals and procedures might be best done in a group session rather than by an individual mentor (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986).

Training for Mentors

Consistently reported throughout the literature is the recognition that mentors, not only new teachers, need staff development. The supervisory role implied by mentoring is even more complex than that of teaching and mentors need ongoing inservice; mentors do not automatically know how to effectively work with adults just because they are good teachers of children (Thies-Sprinthall, 1986). Bird (1986, p. 22) comments on this need for training: "To lead, the mentors must acquire additional knowledge and skills, e.g., in observing teaching, consulting with teachers, or training teachers." The literature offers additional suggestions for such training (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; Galvez-Hjornevik & Smith, 1985; Huling-Austin, Barnes & Smith, 1985; Thies-Sprinthall, 1986; Krupp, 1987). A limited number of materials specifically designed to train mentors are now available, for example, the Mentor Teacher Handbook (Brozoska, et al., 1987) and the Mentor Teacher Casebook (Shulman & Colbert, 1988).

A Supportive Environment

Mentoring does not occur in a vacuum but within the larger school context. It is important that a supportive environment be created. This of course requires the full commitment of both administrators and teachers to the program. Commitment, however, is not enough to guarantee success. Teachers and administrators must also recognize and plan for changed interpersonal and organizational relationships (Bird, 1986; Krupp, 1987).

Interpersonal relationships are altered as a mentor's status is differentiated from other teachers. Mentors assume a new leadership role for which they may receive training, release from classroom duties, additional pay, and/or new career opportunities. Teachers who are not mentors may resent such incentives. Mentors themselves may feel overwhelmed by new responsibilities. Unless the environment encourages positive interpersonal relationships, staff morale may suffer.

Traditional organizational relationships must change to ensure the success of a mentoring program. Teachers in mentoring programs are no longer isolated and left alone in their classroom, but rather are expected to work together on instructional improvement. However, long-standing school organizational patterns often make it difficult to collaborate. Mentor teachers are asked to become leaders, and such experience increases their decision-making skills, but the school organization may not really accommodate increased teacher participation and leadership (Bird, 1986). It takes effort to ensure that changes in interpersonal and institutional relationships are positive (Kent, 1985).

Realistic Program Expectations

Teacher induction programs can be planned for several different purposes (Huling-Austin 1986; Newcombe, 1987), and mentoring is a strategy that might be used to help achieve these goals. However, mentoring programs cannot be expected to resolve all the problems of new teachers and a mentoring relationship between two teachers is not the same as a complete induction program (Driscoll, Peterson & Kauchak, 1985; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Wagner, 1985). Mentoring is only a part of the needed educational reforms that affect the development and worklife of teachers. It is crucial to integrate mentoring with other school improvement efforts.

Two additional conditions deemed desirable in the literature for success are the voluntary participation of new teachers, and mentors who support but do not evaluate new teachers (ERIC Clearinghouse, 1986; Gray & Gray, 1985). However, in some effective programs both of these stipulations have been overridden (Newcombe, 1987).

The Mentoring Program -- Determining Roles and Activities

The literature on mentoring, including program descriptions and suggestions for successful practice, provides a knowledge base for program development. This information can be used to discover the mentoring activities that are common in practice, the various organizational and administrative arrangements used for planning/implementing programs, and the steps implied in program development (Galvez-Hjornevik, 1985b; Krupp, 1984).

Mentoring in Practice

Before designing and implementing a mentoring program, educators should have a good picture of how a program might look in practice. Although

mentoring programs differ in how the relationship is structured, many share a common core of activities, including mentor training and formal and informal meetings between the mentor and new teacher. Figure 2 outlines some common activities found in mentor-new teacher relationships suggested by the literature.

Shared Roles and Responsibilities

Many role-groups are interested in and directly contribute to mentoring programs. State departments of education, school districts, schools, institutions of higher-education, and professional associations are all involved. The literature directly discusses appropriate roles for such groups (Brooks, 1987; Griffin & Hukill, 1983; McDonald, 1980), and additional information about roles can be inferred from program descriptions. The careful reader can use the literature to stimulate his/her thinking on ways to share responsibilities for mentoring programs. Listed below are some common roles/responsibilities for mentoring programs at the state, district, and school levels.

State Level

- Program guidelines
- Technical assistance
- Mentor training
- Special funding.

District Level

- Program planning
- Program administration
- Budgeting

Figure 2

An Example of Common Mentoring Activities

Before School Starts

- Mentors receive training in communication, teacher observation and conferencing, and effective instruction skills.
- Mentors and new teachers attend an orientation session covering program expectations, participant responsibilities, and program activities.
- Mentors and new teachers meet in the new teachers' classroom to talk about practical considerations for the opening of school such as: room arrangement, classroom rules, school procedures, obtaining supplies, and lesson plans for the first week.

During the First Few Months of School

- Mentors and new teachers meet frequently both formally and informally to discuss issues of instruction and classroom management.
- Mentors provide emotional support to new teachers.
- Mentors observe new teachers once a week and give feedback.

During the Remaining Months of the School Year

- Mentors and new teachers meet less often.
- New teachers observe in mentors' classroom.
- Mentors and new teachers establish a dialogue on effective teaching.
- Mentors and new teachers review their relationship to determine whether it should continue.

At the End of the School Year

- Mentors and new teachers evaluate the program.
- Mentors and new teachers participate in a recognition ceremony.

- Mentor training
- Monitoring/evaluation.

School Level

- Participant selection
- Scheduling
- Implementation.

Program Development

Establishing a mentoring program requires careful planning and follow-through. The process of program development includes planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. Listed below are suggested activities for developing a program that come from descriptions in the literature.

Planning Phase

- Establish planning committee
- Determine new teachers' need for support
- Develop program goals
- Set budget
- Decide on administrative structure
- Choose evaluation/monitoring team
- Define roles for mentors
- Plan program activities
- List guidelines for selection of participants
- Design mentor training
- Decide on implementation schedules/procedures.

Implementation Phase

- Select participants

- Train mentors
- Match mentor-new teachers pairs
- Implement mentoring activities: orientation, informal relationships, teacher observation/feedback, formal conferences
- Schedule building-team meetings
- Schedule additional training/meetings for mentors
- Maintain a supportive environment
- Monitor activities.

Evaluation Phase

- Evaluate achievement of program goals
- Evaluate new teacher growth and retention
- Evaluate mentor role
- Use evaluation results to make program changes.

Recommendations

The literature on mentoring provides a foundation on which to base decisions regarding program development. It is recommended that educators consider the implications of the literature in planning a statewide mentoring program. School districts should initiate a pilot mentoring program before adopting one districtwide.

For the pilot program, the district should:

- Issue the basic guidelines and schedule for program participation and activities
- Offer special funding to schools for the costs of the stipend for mentors
- Establish a formal monitoring and evaluation system for program activities
- Provide mentor training and technical assistance to participating schools.

Schools which participate in the pilot program should:

- Establish groups to plan a program that is within district guidelines and meets the needs of new teachers
- Select the individual program participants
- Implement planned activities
- Facilitate mentor-new teacher classroom observation and conferencing, including the provision of substitutes where necessary
- Participate in the monitoring and evaluation system.

Basic program activities of the pilot program should contain at least the following:

- three to five days of mentor training before school starts, and additional time as needed during the school year
- one day of program orientation for administrators, mentors, and new teachers before school starts
- one mentor paired with each new teacher
- mentor-new teacher pairs engage in formal observation/conference once a week during the first month of the school year, twice a month during the second and third months, and once a month during the rest of the year; they also meet informally as needed during the school year.

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